

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

MBTA Unveils Accessible Trolley Buses

In June the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority unveiled the first of its new generation of 28 trackless trolleys. Now dubbed "electric trolley buses" or ETBs, these vehicles will replace the nearly 30-year-old trackless trolley fleet, serving passengers out of Harvard Square station to destinations in Cambridge, Belmont and Watertown.

Substituting the traditional wheelchair lift with a ramp, these low-floor ETBs are unique in that they allow a wheelchair user to enter or exit on either side of the vehicle. This feature was necessitated by the unusual conditions of the underground boarding platforms in Harvard Square.

When I look at that new piece of equipment, do you know what I see? I see freedom—to be able to go out and use the bus anytime I want to," declared Philip Beaulieu, chair of the Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA. This group has been advocating for accessible trackless trolleys for decades.

At a cost of \$1 million apiece, the new ETBs, manufactured by Neoplan USA in Colorado, are expected to have a service life of 25 years.



MBTA Officials View New Low-Floor ETB

Campaign 2004 – Your Vote, Your Life

Disability rights champion Justin Dart used to say, "Get involved in politics as if your life depended on it, because it does." Find out where the candidates stand on various disability-related issues by checking out their campaign websites or contacting their offices. Learn what the platforms say about health care, trade, education, states' financial struggles, and other issues. Disability policy will be shaped in the context of these other decisions.

Look for their answers to questions on the website for the American Association of Persons with Disabilities:

www.aapd-dc.org/campaign04/presdisability.html

Here is the contact information for the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates:

John F. Kerry, www.johnkerry.com
617-367-1551; info@johnkerry.com

George W. Bush, www.georgewbush.com
703-647-2700; BushCheney04@GeorgeWBush.com

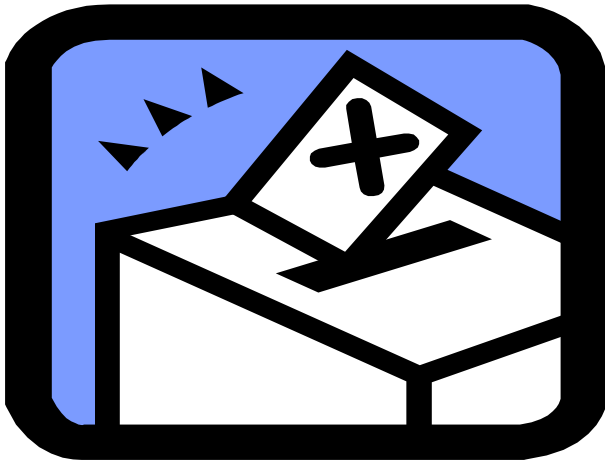
(Your Vote cont'd page 2)



**CCPD Member Larry Braman Tries Out
New Accessible Trolley Bus**

(Your Vote continued)

To register to vote in Cambridge, you must be a U.S. Citizen, a resident of Cambridge, and 18 years old by Election Day. You do not need to re-register unless you change your name, address or party enrollment. You must answer the annual City census to remain on the "active" voting list. Be sure you are registered by August 25 to vote in the September 14 Primary and by October 13 to vote in the November 2 Election.



Help your friends and family members get registered. VOTER REGISTRATION forms are available in several languages from the Cambridge Election Commission at 51 Inman Street in Cambridge www.cambridgema.gov/electioncommission. If you have questions, contact them for more information at 617-349-4361 voice, 617-492-0235 TTY. For information on voting if you do not live in Cambridge, go to the "Where Do I Vote" website for the Secretary of State at: www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php.

You can also make a difference by volunteering to help with a campaign. This conveys the message that people with disabilities are an important voting block. "What politician can afford to overlook one-fifth of the nation's voting-aged population? That massive slice of the electoral pie comprises the roughly 40 million Americans with disabilities who are of voting age. Though not as cohesively identified as other minority groups, the disability vote is one that politicians ignore at their peril," says Brewster Thackeray, VP & Director of Communications for the National Organization on Disability.

Outdoor Recreation for Everyone

Opportunities for outdoor adventures that are accessible to people with all types of disabilities and interests seem to grow each season. Join a group at a state park to learn about shore birds, dairy farms, pond ecology, hawks, military history, bears, or wildflowers. Wheelchair accessible trails, Assistive Listening Devices and ASL interpretation are provided through the Universal Access Program and Bureau of Interpretation of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Through its collaborative partnerships with All Out Adventures, Adaptive Sports and Recreation, and Venture Into Well-Being, the DCR offers other activities such as cycling, kayaking, hiking and camping for people of all abilities.

Contact Universal Access Headquarters at P.O. Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004; 413-545-5353 voice, 413-577-2200 TTY or www.mass.gov/massparks and www.mass.gov/dem/access.htm for more information, fees, registration or to request sign language interpretation for an event. All Out Adventures, Inc can be reached at 413-527-8980 or info@alloutadventures.org.

Outdoor Explorations is another organization that promotes personal growth through outdoor adventures, and serves individuals with physical, sensory, cognitive, emotional and multiple disabilities as well as those without disabilities. Some programs

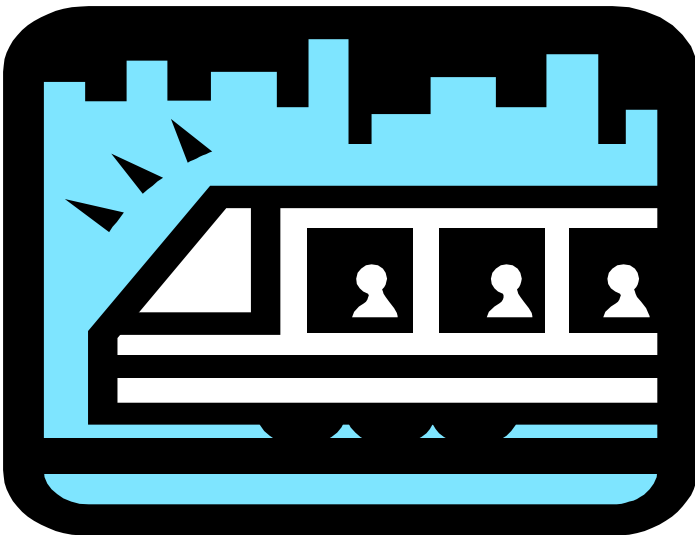


are exclusively for teens, some for families and others for people age 18 and older. There are still openings for the adult sailing, girls' kayaking, family hiking, women's kayaking and camping excursion, and adult kayaking and whitewater rafting events. Contact Outdoor Explorations at 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY or info@outdoorex.org for more details, fees, and registration.

Parents can also find information about summer day and overnight camps on the website for the Federation for Children with Special Needs at www.fcsn.org/camps/2004 or by contacting the American Camping Association at 781-899-2042.

Traffic Changes during DNC

The Democratic National Convention (DNC) that will take place in Boston the week of July 25-30 will have a major impact on traffic for this area. Some streets, highways and traffic lanes will be closed at certain times, parking will be restricted, and public transportation routes and schedules will be affected. Amtrak is not running that week, and MBTA's North Station will be closed from 8 p.m. on Friday, July 23 through July 30. In particular, if you use I-93, Route 1 and the Tobin Bridge, the Leverett Connector, Memorial Drive or Storrow Drive, check the newspaper, the radio and TV or these web sites for updated information. Plan ahead and allow extra time.



For traffic changes in Cambridge:

www.cambridgema.gov/alert.cfm?alert_id=20

MBTA routes and schedules, including The RIDE

http://www.mbta.com/traveling_t/DNCbrochure.asp

SmarTraveler for information on road and lane closures:

*1 on mobile phones or 617-247-2004 or

www.smartraveler.com/scripts/bosdnc.asp

Disability Parking: A Primer

Disability Parking Permits, Placards, and Plates – Disability (handicap) Parking Spaces make it possible for people with certain disabling conditions to get to the entrances of public buildings, events and residences without having to travel a great distance from where their vehicles are parked. Any disabled individual who has a disability placard, plate or permit may use these designated Disability Parking Spaces. Remember, some disabilities may not be immediately obvious. Parking in a designated Disability Parking Space without the appropriate plate, placard or permit incurs a fine of \$100. The fine for using a placard, permit or disability plate that does not belong to you is \$500 for the first offense and \$1000 for each offense thereafter.

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) issues placards that are hung from the rearview mirror or license plates with the international wheelchair symbol. There is a special fee for the license plates but not the placard. These disability placards and plates are valid anywhere in or outside the Commonwealth of Massachusetts via reciprocal agreements with other states. Information and application forms are available from the RMV Medical Affairs Branch office at 630 Washington Street in Boston or on the web at www.state.ma.us/rmv/medical/index.htm. Their phone number is 617-351-9222. The person's physician must complete part of the application.

The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities at 51 Inman Street on the second floor issues **Temporary Disability Parking Permits** for

use in Cambridge only. The eligibility requirements for this permit are comparable to the requirements for the Massachusetts RMV disability plate or placard, though it is intended for use by someone with a temporary disability such as a broken leg. To apply for this Temporary Disability Parking Permit contact the Commission for an application form. We can be reached by phone: 617-349-4692 (voice), 617-492-0235 (TTY) or email at cthompson@cambridgema.gov. The disabled individual's physician must complete part of the form. Once the Commission receives and approves the completed application, the temporary Permit will be issued for a period of one, two, or three months. There is no fee for this service.

Requesting a Disability Parking Space on a public street – To request a designated Disability Parking Space on the street near your residence, contact Cambridge Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, now at 344 Broadway – City Hall Annex, at their website www.cambridgema.gov/~Traffic/other_info.html or by phone 617-349-4700 voice, 617-349-4621 TTY. In general, you will need to provide a written

statement from the owner of your home indicating that you have either no off-street parking where you live, or why the available off-street parking is inadequate or unavailable for your use. You will also need to provide a photocopy of your vehicle registration with disability status and/or vehicle

registration and Disability Placard number, and documentation from your physician.

Accessible Disability Parking Space Requirements – Disability spaces are provided on streets and in parking lots for use by people with Disability Parking Permits, Placards or Plates. The requirements regarding the size, number, location and signage for these accessible parking spaces are set determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). To get these specifications check the

MAAB website at www.mass.gov/aab/download/521cmr23.pdf or contact the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities for more information.



Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

July 7 – August 18 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, a peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities will **take a summer break during July and August**. Contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or woman@braintrust.org for September meetings.

July 7 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in Group** (information & support) on first Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. in the 2nd floor library at the Brookline Public Health Center at 11 Pierce Street. RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our provider evaluation book. For more information, visit web site www.rsiaction.org, email cnot@rsiaction.org or call 617-247-6827.

July 8 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.

- July 8-10 **National Apostolate for Inclusion Ministry (NAfIM) Conference 2004** in Boston at the Park Plaza Hotel and Towers, 64 Arlington St. in Boston. Blessed Are We: Moral Formation and Spiritual Development for Persons with Developmental Delays offers a variety of presentations and workshops on important topics for parents and other family members, guardians, direct service personnel, pastors, chaplains, advocates, volunteers and all who work with people with developmental delays. For more information contact Joan Horgan at 800-327-6114 or email at Espousal011@rcn.com. Late registration fee has been waived. Friday workshops are \$100 if you brown bag it/ \$175 with banquet.
- July 13 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Room 143. There is often a guest speaker. Go to their website at harvee.billerica.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/boston-voice-users and click on Boston-voice-users Archives to find out more about meetings and discussions.
- July 15 **Autism Support Group, Arlington Area** will meet 9:30-11 a.m. at the May Center for Early Childhood Education, 10 Acton Street in Arlington. For more information contact Maureen Branconnier at the Autism Support Center, 978-777-9135, or check web at www2.shore.net/~nsarc
- July 17-18 **Teaching Children with Autism in Inclusive Settings**, a workshop series for classroom teachers, instructional aides, inclusion facilitators at Westfield State College in Westfield, MA. Registration is \$45 for one day, \$80 for both days; DEADLINE is July 6. Contact Community Resources for People with Autism for more information, 413-59-2428, 116 Pleasant Street, Easthampton, MA 01027.
- July 17-Aug.21 **Building Blocks Playgroup for children with a diagnosis on the autism spectrum** is a 6-week Saturday morning program, 9:30-11 at the Danvers First Steps Child Care Center. A staff of trained specialists will focus on developing social interactions and play skills while increasing communication skills. For ages 33 months to 6 years. Department of Public Health will subsidize some registration fees. Space is limited. Contact Lynne Doane, Director, at 978-762-8352 by July 7 to register.
- July 17 **"Much Ado About Nothing" – ASL -interpreted and open captioned performance** at 8 p.m. on the Boston Common. Bring a picnic, a blanket or lawn chairs, the family and enjoy this FREE experience of Shakespeare on the Common. The romantic comedy romps with wit and zeal through the travails of two couples who become victims of artful deception, one pushed together and the other thrown apart despite their wishes. Seats in front of the stage will be held for patrons wishing to view the interpreters and captioning; no reservations are needed. The rain date for this ASL performance is Sunday, July 18. Other performances without ASL interpretation run from July 10 through August 1. For more information about the accessible performance, call 617-482-5757 TTY or 617-482-9393 voice, email jbien@wangcenter.org or visit www.wangcenter.org/.
- July 19 **Monthly RSI Action organizational meeting**, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in Kenmore Square at 650 Beacon Street, 4th floor conference room. Get involved on the "giving" side of RSI Action by attending the organizational meeting to help plan activities, talks, support and drop-in groups, and the web site. If you are interested, contact RSI Action at cnot@rsiaction.org and include your phone number so you can be informed of any last-minute changes to the date or location. If you have any questions, please call Kathy at 617-262-0657.
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- July 20 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston.
- July 28 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1-3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request Interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- August 2 **Metro North Autism Support Group**, 9:30-11 a.m. at the Wakefield Library Trustees Room, 345 Main Street. This group will focus on non-verbal children and children with more significant needs. For more information contact Maureen Branconnier at the Autism Support Center, 978-777-9135, 1-800-7AUTISM or check web at www2.shore.net/~nsarc.
- August 4 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in Group**, 6-8 p.m. (See July 7 listing for details.)
- August 12 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- August 18 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1-3:30 p.m. (on the 3rd Wednesday this month.) at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request Interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- Sept. 1 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in Group**, 6-8 p.m. (See July 7 listing for details.)
- Sept. 9 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- Sept. 18 **Youth Leadership Forum at Harvard (DEADLINE to register for this one-day event is September 10th.)** Sponsored by the Governor's Commission on Employment of People with Disabilities in concert with Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) and Harvard Business School. Delegates will focus on leadership development, civil rights and careers. For more information contact Maureen Gallagher or Deep Chinappa at PYD, 617-556-4075 or dchinappa@pyd.org.

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

The Commission was established in 1979 to act as a clearinghouse on disability and access issues throughout the City of Cambridge. We strive to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory. The Commission provides information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to individuals and their families, employers, public agencies, businesses and private non-profit organizations. Examples of our ongoing work include:

- Work with various City departments to ensure **compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** and related state and federal disability rights laws;
- Provide free **disability awareness training** upon request for any Cambridge business or nonprofit entity;
- Issue **temporary disability parking permits** to Cambridge residents;
- Cosponsor the **taxi discount coupon program** with the Cambridge Council on Aging; and
- Facilitate additional **accessible parking spaces** through the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department.

The goal of our 11-member citizen advisory board, comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities, is to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life. Our regularly scheduled Commission meetings, which always include an opportunity for public comment, are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

Access Notice: The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in e-mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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Carolyn Thompson, *Disability Project Coordinator*

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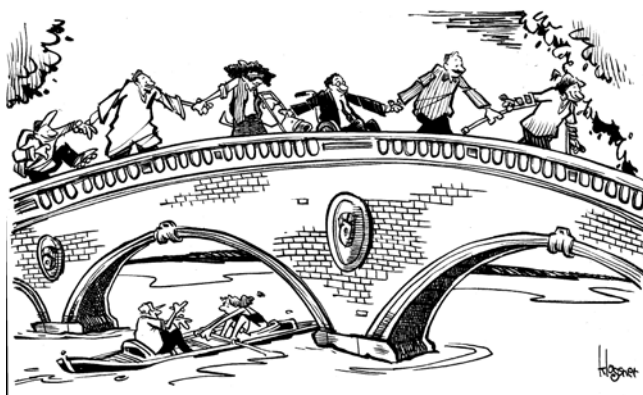
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Access**Letter** is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
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51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/~CCPD

If you would rather receive your copy of Access**Letter** electronically, please provide us with your name and e-mail address. To request that your name be removed from our mailing list, contact us at 617-349-4692 Voice, 617-349-0235 TTY, 617-349-4766 Fax, or cthompson@cambridgema.gov

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